



# OSWER Innovations Pilot

## ***Florida Green Lodging Locator and Information Service***

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*The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) initiated a series of innovative pilots to test new ideas and strategies for environmental and public health protection to make OSWER programs more efficient, effective, and user-friendly. A small amount of money is set aside to fund creative proposals. The creative projects test approaches to waste minimization, energy recovery, recycling, land revitalization, and homeland security that may be replicated across various sectors, industries, communities, and regions. We hope these pilots will pave the way for programmatic and policy recommendations by demonstrating the environmental and economic benefits of creative, innovative approaches to the difficult environmental challenges we face today.*

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### **BACKGROUND**

The millions of visitors staying in Florida's hotels and motels leave a significant environmental footprint on the state. With nearly 400,000 rooms in over 4,700 lodging establishments serving 35 million guests annually, Florida's lodging industry is one of the largest commercial sectors in the state. From a waste reduction and resource conservation perspective, this industry has enormous potential. Unfortunately, waste reduction and conservation programs are sorely lacking in the vast majority of tourist-related businesses. An increasing number of tourists and business travelers want to make environmentally informed choices in lodging, but hotel owners have been slow to tap this market because they do not recognize its full business potential.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has established a Florida Green Lodging Certification (GLC) Program to encourage the lodging industry to adopt innovative and sustainable practices for conserving natural resources, reducing waste, and minimizing pollution. The GLC program has enjoyed increasing participation from representatives of the state's lodging industry. To increase the effectiveness of the GLC program and encourage more lodging establishments to adopt green practices, visitors to the state need a resource for locating "green hotels." Making this link will benefit both the lodging industry and the environment.

### **PILOT APPROACH**

U.S. EPA Region 4, in partnership with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection will develop an on-line green lodging locator. The interactive on-line technology will include only green certified lodging listings posted on a geo-coded map. Listings also will include specific information on hotel green practices. Initially, the on-line tool will be used to inform Florida visitors on the availability of state-certified green lodges and an provide overview of green amenities at each hotel. The pilot compliments the recently established Florida GLC program and will encourage more hotels in the state to enter the certification program.

### **INNOVATION**

The GLC program will expand the scope of traditional hotel/motel environmental stewardship to include programs that will establish innovative and sustainable practices for conserving natural resources, reducing waste, and minimizing pollution.

### **BENEFITS**

Opportunities for improving the environmental performance of the lodging industry exist through water conservation, energy efficiency, environmentally preferable purchasing, recycling, material substitutions, and process improvements. Consumer preference serves

as an important driver to encourage this industry to adopt green practices and lessen the strain on Florida's natural resources and waste management systems. This pilot will enable those consumers who prefer green lodging practices to exercise their choices more effectively and thereby encourage further participation in FDEP's Green Lodging Certification program.

## **CONTACTS**

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For additional information, visit the EPA OSWER Innovations web site at: [www.epa.gov/oswer/IWG.htm](http://www.epa.gov/oswer/IWG.htm).